

Elizabeth King Eaton, 1943–2009



Elizabeth King Eaton died on February 3, 2009. She had been a member of the Medical Library Association (MLA) since 1973, serving most recently on the

2007 National Program Committee. MLA members who attended MLA '07 in Chicago will remember Elizabeth's introduction of John P. McGovern at the John P. McGovern Award Lecture featuring Andrew Zolli. Elizabeth was also very active in the South Central Chapter of the Medical Library Association, the Association of Academic Health Sciences Libraries, the South Central Academic Medical Libraries Consortium, the Texas Health Science Libraries Consortium, and the Houston Area Research Library Consortium. She was a National Library of Medicine medical informatics fellow and a founding member of the Texas Medical Center Women's Health Network.

Elizabeth was born in New York, New York, and spent her early childhood years in postwar Germany, where her father was a lawyer at the Nuremberg trials. She grew up in Tolland, Connecticut, on a family farm. Elizabeth earned her bachelor's degree in chemistry, math, and astronomy from Hood College in Frederick, Maryland. After graduation, she moved to Boston to accept a position at the Massachusetts General Hospital, where she worked in a research lab. Several years later, she fulfilled her dream of traveling abroad by accepting a job at St. Bartholomew's Medical College in London as a research assistant in the gastrointestinal lab.

After several years in London, Elizabeth returned to the United States to take a research assistant position at the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA) and while there, decided to pursue a master's degree in library science.

"My mother was a librarian, and I could think of no finer role model on which to pattern my career," Elizabeth said in a 2002 interview with *Texas Medical Center News*. Always interested in science, she specialized in biomedical library science at UCLA and then went on to earn a doctorate in biomedical sciences from The University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston, where she served as associate director of public services at the Moody Medical Library from 1974 to 1982. Elizabeth was instrumental in creating an innovative clinical medical librarian program, which was also the topic of her doctoral dissertation.

In 1982, with her doctorate in hand, Elizabeth accepted a position as director of the Tufts University Health Sciences Library in Boston (now the Hirsh Health Sciences Library). While at Tufts, she was instrumental in the redesign and modernization of the new library building that opened in 1986. She embraced the electronic age and was an energetic advocate for computerized resources. Elizabeth served as a faculty facilitator in the medical school's problem-based learning program and published and presented several papers on the topic. She directed a course on new technologies in the Tufts/Emerson Health Communications Program. In addition, she taught the "Medical Librarianship" course in the Simmons College Graduate School of Library and Information Science in 1988 and 1989.

Elizabeth was a co-principal investigator for the National Library of Medicine's Integrated Advanced Information Management Systems (IAIMS) planning grant awarded to the Tufts Health Campus in 1993. With this grant, she helped lead a strategic planning effort that culminated in the development of the Health Sciences Database (now the Tufts University Sciences Knowledgebase), which was a curriculum manage-

ment database for the Tufts Health Sciences Schools. The database received a CIO Enterprise Value Award in 2001, making Tufts the first academic institution to receive this award. Under her direction, the library also received a subcontract for outreach from the National Network of Libraries of Medicine, New England Region, for Selected Patient Information Resources in Asian Languages (SPIRAL) <<http://spiral.tufts.edu>>, a website that provides consumer health materials in multiple Asian languages.

In 2001, Eaton returned to Texas to become executive director of the Houston Academy of Medicine-Texas Medical Center (HAM-TMC) Library and director of the National Network of Libraries of Medicine, South Central Region. The library had recently been flooded by Tropical Storm Allison, and one of Elizabeth's first duties was to recover more than 800 boxes of wet historical documents and photos from the library's McGovern Historical Collections and Research Center. Under her direction, the library leased a 12,000-square-foot warehouse facility, which remains the home of the library's archives and fine arts collection.

Among her initiatives at the HAM-TMC Library was a student outreach program, where she and other librarians made rounds at all the TMC colleges and universities, teaching students how to conduct literature searches and use the library to meet their educational and research needs. "New students attend orientation and learn where to park on campus and where to go for recreation. I can't think of anything more important for medical, nursing or allied health students to know than how to use the library," she stated at an official reception at her introduction to the HAM-TMC community in March 2002. Elizabeth transitioned the HAM-TMC Library from print to electronic resources

and ensured that all resources were co-located in other parts of the country. With these changes, even Hurricane Ike couldn't interrupt access to the library's electronic resources.

Long-time friend and MLA member Donna Flake, AHIP, recently wrote this about Elizabeth:

Elizabeth and I shared a passion for reaching out beyond the US borders to medical librarians worldwide. Elizabeth was always involved in MLA international activities. She was very enthusiastic about the Cunningham Fellowship and hosted Cunningham Fellows with much love and care. In 1999, MLA created a Cunningham Fellowship Task Force. I was the chair, and Elizabeth served on the task force with much hard work and dedication. Again, the cause of international medical librarianship was very dear to her. Laura Shane Godbolt, Beatrice Doran, I and a few other medical librarians visited with Elizabeth in her apartment in Boston during the 2001 International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) meeting. She took us across the street to an Italian restaurant where she and the owner and the staff were all great friends. I recall how much I admired Elizabeth's ability to touch people from many different walks of life with her kindness and passion for living. During this visit, Elizabeth told us about her

bicycle pilgrimage across northern Spain to Santiago de Compostela. Again, I admired her passion for life and enthusiasm.

In 2006, when the MLA annual meeting was in Phoenix, Shane and Donna planned a picnic with Elizabeth and her husband, Frank Ybarra, in beautiful Sedona, Arizona. They had a great time and enjoyed seeing how much Frank loved his Elizabeth. Donna wrote: "Elizabeth brought wine, and we had a fine picnic and then a hike. It was a favorite memory for me." Donna's last interaction with Elizabeth was about international relations. She told Elizabeth that she wanted to establish a partnership with two medical librarians in the Ukraine and asked her if the HAM-TMC library would supply thirty free interlibrary loans per year to the medical library in Lviv, Ukraine. She said yes without hesitation. In Donna's words: "That was Elizabeth—always willing to help and go the extra mile for everyone. We were all touched by Elizabeth's beautiful life."

She was a lover of fine Scotch and had a unique way of drinking: with only one ice cube and no soda ever! Sometimes, she would put a few ice cubes in a separate glass and add the cubes to her glass one at a time. Her friends said that it was quite a ritual! A lover of travel, her next planned trip was to be to

Scotland, where she planned to tour the country, tasting fine Scotch along the way.

Elizabeth was buried in Lexington Cemetery, Lexington, Kentucky, in a family plot. She is survived by her husband, Frank, and by Frank's two children, her own five brothers and sisters, and seven nieces and nephews. After Elizabeth's death, another colleague, MLA member Holly Shipp Buchanan, AHIP, wrote in a book to be presented to Elizabeth's family:

I remember Elizabeth as a proud aunt, visiting her sister Suzy and niece in New Mexico for riding competitions. My son was close in age and also liked to ride. Elizabeth and I often talked about horses in Kentucky. I remember the joy Elizabeth showed after meeting Frank Ybarra, falling in love, and finally marriage. It was a pleasure for me to see both together and loving life partners.

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DOI: 10.3163/1536-5050.97.4.006

VOLUME 97 ERRATUM

97(2) April, page 75

DOI: 10.3163/1536-5050.97.4.026

Morgan LK, Stickell HN. Dorothy R. Hill, 1931–2007 [obituary]. *J Med Libr Assoc.* 2009 Apr;97(2):75–6. DOI: 10.3163/1536-5050.97.2.002.

The year of Dorothy Hill's death should be 2008 in the title of the obituary, rather than 2007, on page 75. We regret the error.